

Crepe Paper and Ribbons by IAmTheUnsub

Series: Reddie Au [3]

Category: IT (Movies - Muschietti), IT - Stephen King

Genre: Comedian Richie, Department store au, F/M, Florist AU, Gay Eddie Kaspbrak, Gay Mike Hanlon, Gay Richie Tozier, Gay Stanley Uris, Gen, M/M, Multi, Visual Merchandiser Stan, florist eddie, giftwrapper eddie, is that even a thing?, wrapping gifts is romantic

Language: English

Characters: Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, Mike Hanlon, Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris

Relationships: Ben Hanscom/Beverly Marsh, Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier, Mike Hanlon/Stamley Uris, Richie Tozier & Stanley Uris

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2019-11-21

Updated: 2019-11-27

Packaged: 2019-12-19 03:01:45

Rating: General Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 2

Words: 6,059

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

“What? No! Holy shit no, Stan! I’m gay as all hell. I’m in love with your florist and I need to buy something gay because he assumed I was straight and I was too busy staring at him to correct him”, Richie babbles.

“Eddie?” Stan questions.

“That’s the bitch! I need to have him gift-wrap something super gay for me so I can reveal my gayness is a super organic way, then I’ll swing by the jewellery department to propose. Oh! He can do the flowers for our wedding!” Richie explains, genuinely excited.

Based on a prompt from @Iracebeth3 on twitter

'Person A is a gift-wrapper at a mall and Person B just keeps buying pointless stuff to try and chat with them'

1. Chanel No.5

Author's Note:

I don't know either tbh. Just indulge my oddly specific AU.

Also please send me ideas for things for Richie to buy. All mine are dirty and this doesn't feel like that kind of fic 🙈

“Perfume, perfume, perfume...”

“Are you looking for the perfume?”

Richie jumps, head swivelling away from the store directory to look at the man now standing beside him. He's gorgeous, in a snobby, polished way. He's got a neatly styled head of blonde curls and flawless skin. Like all the other employees at this store, he's not in uniform. He's wearing an expensive-looking, black suit, and there's an honest to god pocket square with what looks like tiny birds embroidered on it sticking out of the breast pocket. That's how fancy this store is. Despite being pretty well-off, Richie feels out of place. Should he be wearing a suit? Does he even own a suit? He'd have to ask his assistant later. The only reason Richie can tell that the guy works here is the sleek, silver name tag pinned to his lapel proclaiming him to be *'Stanley Uris- Visual Merchandiser'*. What the fuck even is a visual merchandiser? He'd have to ask his assistant later.

“Sir”, Richie realises he's been too busy taking the guy in to answer his question.

“Oh! Um, It's Richie, please. Yeah, I'm on a perfume based quest. What gave me away? The insane ramblings?” Richie jokes, trying to pierce the thick, overly-formal atmosphere.

“More so the smell, sir”, Stan replies, stone-faced.

Richie stares at him, jaw hanging loose, for a second. Then he starts cackling and claps the other man on the shoulder. Richie thinks he sees the corner of Stan’s mouth quirk up.

“Stan the Man! Forget the perfume, show me to the pharmacy aisle, I need some aloe vera for that burn!” Richie crows, he uses the hand on Stan’s shoulder to steer him away down the aisle to their left, “Seriously though, please show me where the perfume is, I’m so lost”.

Stan ducks out from under Richie’s arm, takes a hold of his wrist and turns around, leading Richie in the opposite direction. They pass through the clothing department, the jewellery department and the makeup department before reaching a section that immediately made Richie nervous. It was full of very breakable glass bottles and a cacophonous smell that almost immediately overwhelms him. He stares at Stan with wide eyes, silently begging for guidance. Stan just guides him up to another employee, this time a tall, broad man with dark skin and wide smile. His whole face lights up when he sees Stan and he stands a little straighter.

Stan holds Richie’s wrist out to the new man, who takes it with a puzzled look on his face.

“Mike, this is Richie, can you please help him choose some perfume?”

Understanding dawns on Mike’s face and he nods.

“Sure thing, Stan”.

Stan smiles and turns to walk away. Richie looks to Mike.

“Should I tip him? I should tip him, right?” he asks.

“It’s up to you, man. It’s not mandatory but we’re saving for our wedding so I’m sure he’d appreciate it”, Mike shrugs.

Richie nods and frees his wrist from Mike’s gentle grasp, chasing after Stan and pulling his wallet out at the same time. His long legs eat up the distance and he catches up to the other man before he’s even left the perfume department.

“Stan the Man! Wait up! Here, twenty for showing me the way and thirty for the absolutely flawless burn”, Richie hands him a fifty-dollar bill with a flourish and a cheesy grin.

Stan looks down at the bill in his hands, eyes widening for a second before he schools his features into a demure smile.

“Thank you, Sir. I hope Mike can help you find what you’re looking for”, Stan accepts the tip with grace, then finally escapes.

When Richie returns to Mike, his eyebrows are raised.

“When you said a tip, I thought you meant like ten bucks!”

“Nah, this store is too fancy for that! Plus, he saved my ass, Mikey. I’d have wandered around for hours if he hadn’t hand delivered me to you”, Richie replies, placing his own wrist back into Mike’s hand.

“Yeah, not gonna lie, man, I thought he was proposing a threesome”, Mike shoots back with a grin. Richie explodes into giggles.

“He do that often?” Richie manages to ask through laughter.

“Depends on how many tequila shots he has, to be honest”, Mike responds in a thoughtful tone, “Anyway, I should do my job. Perfume?”

“Perfume!” Richie agrees.

Silence. Mike stares at Richie expectantly and Richie stares back, clueless.

“Do you have any idea what you want?” Mike questions hopefully.

“None at all. Completely fucking lost over here, dude”, Richie tells him.

“Okay, that’s alright. How about you tell about who it’s for? Girlfriend? Boyfriend? Mom? Mistress? Please tell me it’s not a mistress”, Mike begs playfully.

“Oh Christ, no. It’s for my friend, Bev. Her fashion line’s new

collection has its first catwalk show this weekend and we're all buying her something to wear. Her boyfriend got her some jewellery and our other friend Bill got her some shoes so I'm on perfume duty", Richie explains.

"Okay, cool. I can work with that. Do you have a budget in mind?" Mike asks, already looking around and narrowing down the less romantic options.

"Not really. I mean, not to sound like a dick, but money's not really an issue. Ben bought her diamonds and Bill bought her those super expensive heels with the red bottoms, so I need to match the vibe, you know?"

"Yeah, I get you. Do you know what kind of smell profile she'd go for? Fruity? Floral? Musky?" Mike lists.

"So, my choices are fruit bowl, flower bed or armpit? I think I'll go for flower bed", Richie says, confused about who would want to smell musky.

"Well, if you want to keep up the classic designer theme, I'd probably recommend a bottle of Chanel number five?", Mike leads Richie over to a tasteful, understated podium of clear glass bottles filled with amber liquid.

"I'll take that one, that's more impressive than diamonds, right?" Richie asks, pointing to the largest bottle with his free hand.

"I don't think I can answer that, Richie. I'd take a Barnes and Noble gift card any day", he grabs the bottle and walks Richie to the small cash register in the corner, releasing Richie's wrist to ring him up "that'll be two hundred and thirty dollars, you want this gift wrapped?"

"Please. Last time I tried to wrap a present I taped my hand to my own face", Richie jokes, relieved, as he hands over his credit card. Mike laughs, but Richie hopes he knows it wasn't a joke.

"I feel you, man. I'm awful at it too, can't tie a bow to save my life. I'll go get our in-house florist, the man can do insane things with

crepe paper and ribbons. You alright to wait here?", Mike swipes Richie's card and hands him his receipt.

"Sure thing, I'm in no rush", Richie assured him.

Mike walks off and Richie takes out his phone. He scrolls mindlessly through Instagram, follows an account of a Pomeranian wearing cute costumes, likes Ben's latest post (an artful black and white shot of Bev curled up in an overstuffed armchair with a coffee mug pressed between her palms), then likes a fan photo of him on stage the night before, taken from an unflatteringly low angle. He screenshots it and makes it his profile picture.

When he looks up again, there's an angel behind the counter. Like, a literal fucking angel. The most gorgeous guy Richie's ever seen, and he walked past Oscar Isaac once at a premiere. The guy's hair is neatly combed down but there's what looks like a flower petal stuck in it, right above his left ear, it takes so much willpower for Richie to not reach out and pluck the petal out. There's a gnarly scar on his cheek, but Richie follows the line of it down to a chiselled, clean-shaven jaw. Richie suddenly realises he's gawping at the guy like an idiot and he isn't sure how long he's been standing there, but he hopes it hasn't been too long, seeing as the guy hasn't set the rolls of paper in his arms down yet. He smiles when he meets Richie's eyes, shifts the paper into the crook of one muscular arm and holds his hand out for Richie to shake. Richie takes a second to shake off the awe and reach for him.

"Hi, I'm Eddie", the angel introduces himself, gripping Richie's hand firmly in his own. Richie tries not to imagine where else that firm grip could go. He fails.

"Hi Eddie", Richie repeats dumbly. Eddie just smiles indulgently and lets Richie keep shaking his hand, probably used to people being stunned into stupidity by his beauty.

"Do you have a name?" He asks teasingly.

"Oh shit, yeah, Richie! Sorry", Richie apologises, finally letting go of Eddie's hand. Eddie makes a show of playfully shaking his wrist out and flexing his fingers, then puts his supplies down on the table.

“No worries, buying gifts is stressful, I get it”, Eddie shrugs and picks up the perfume, “ooh! Fancy, must be for someone special”.

“Yeah Bev’s great. I don’t know if Mike told you, but she’s got her first fashion show this weekend. I’m just so proud of her, you know? She’s worked so hard and she really deserves this”, Richie rambles nervously, just needing something to say to stop himself from hitting on the florist while he’s working.

“She sounds awesome, she seems lucky to have you as a boyfriend”, Eddie says, smile softer this time.

“Yeah, she’s great- wait, what? No she-” Richie protests.

“Is purple and silver good?” Eddie asks, holding up a roll of purple paper and a spool of silver ribbon.

“Uh... yeah, yeah that’s fine”, as soon as Richie confirms it, Eddie’s hands are a blur, scissors flashing. Richie watches in wonder as, barely a minute later, Eddie presents him with a beautifully wrapped package, complete with a perfect silver bow on top. Richie takes it and inspects it.

“How the fuck...”

“When you make bouquets for a living, a rectangular box is a nice break”, Eddie explains with a proud grin. He checks his watch and winces, “Sorry, but I really need to head back to the flower counter. I left Mike in charge and he doesn’t have a clue what he’s doing. I hope your girl likes the perfume”, Eddie reaches across the counter to shake Richie’s hand again, then gathers up his supplies and walks off. He gets about four steps away before Richie remembers that he should pay him for his work.

“Wait”, Richie fishes another fifty dollar bill out of his wallet and jogs after Eddie, then realises his hands are full, so he just awkwardly tucks it into his apron like he’s the tamest stripper ever, “thank you, man, really, you probably saved me a serious scissor-related injury”.

“You don’t have to do that, Richie. Seriously, it only took me, like, a minute”, Eddie tries to free up a hand to retrieve the bill and return

it, but his rolls of paper wobble precariously and he's forced to put both hands on them again.

"Nope! Can't make me take it back! Actually, here, give this one to Mike too!", Richie tucks yet another fifty into the apron.

"Richie, stop! You'll bankrupt yourself", Eddie protests, but he's grinning, so Richie figures he doesn't really mind.

"Impossible! I have stocks in Blockbuster, I'll be rich forever!" Richie crows in his most pompous voice. Eddie throws his head back and laughs, free and loud. Richie finds himself awestruck by this man for what feels like the tenth time in as many minutes. When Eddie calms down, he speaks again.

"Seriously though, it's really generous, but I can't accept it, Richie"

"Honestly, you'd be doing me a favour. The more expensive I can say this was, the more impressed Bev will be" Richie explains, holding up the gift.

Eddie's smile falters slightly and he straightens up.

"Right, well... Thank you. If you want to treat her to flowers, you know where to come", Eddie finally walks away.

Richie is left standing there, wondering how the atmosphere had changed so suddenly. Then he remembered that Eddie had called Bev his girlfriend and Richie hadn't had a chance to correct him.

"Shit", Richie groans.

Only one man can help him now.

* * *

"Stan!" Richie calls out to the other man as he slides into the aisle, almost losing his footing before he catches himself on the edge of a display rack.

Stan looks up from where he's dressing a mannequin in a long dress that Richie idly thinks has way too many buttons to be practical. Stan

looks puzzled at first, then he recognises Richie and his face smooths over into a mask of professionalism. He straightens up and faces Richie, who's out of breath and panting, having just run all over the building searching for him.

"Richie, what can I do for you. I see Mike helped you find your gift?" he asks calmly, as if sweaty, panting comedians were common customers for him.

"Oh he was great. Awesome guy. Wants us to have a threesome", he ignores Stan's suddenly red face and continued, "but that's not why I'm here, sorry. What's the gayest thing in the store?", Richie asks. Stan's professional demeanour drops, and suddenly he's stone-faced.

"If you're about to make some sort of joke about myself or Mike, then I'm going to have to ask you to leave, sir", he grits out through clenched teeth.

"What? No! Holy shit no, Stan! I'm gay as all hell. I'm in love with your florist and I need to buy something gay because he assumed I was straight and I was too busy staring at him to correct him", Richie babbles. Stan's face remains guarded, but he relaxes a little.

"Eddie?" he questions.

"That's the bitch! I need to have him gift-wrap something super gay for me so I can reveal my gayness is a super organic way, then I'll swing by the jewellery department to propose. Oh! He can do the flowers for our wedding!" Richie explains, genuinely excited.

Stan looks at him, blinks slowly, then turns his back to start dressing the mannequin again.

"Stan? Stanley? Stan the Man? Stannington Stanworth? I'll give you the biggest tip you've ever seen... Don't tell Mike though", Richie waggles his eyebrows flirtatiously.

Stan wavers for a second, hands pausing for slightly too long between buttons. Richie latches onto to the tiny action with fervour.

"Yeah! Mike said you two are planning your wedding, right? Weddings are super expensive, Stan! If you help me gate a date with

Eddie then I'll pay for your venue, anywhere you want!" Richie offers desperately.

Stan turns back to him, looks him up and down coolly.

"Venue, entertainment, bar and cake. Plus I can't guarantee a date, but I'll gladly offer my services", Stan counter-offers, holding his hand out for Richie to shake.

"Do I look like I'm made of money?!" Richie blanches.

"You literally chased me down and handed me fifty dollars just for showing you where the perfumes are", Stan deadpans, one eyebrow raised as if daring Richie to argue.

"...Venue, entertainment and cake, you can go fuck yourself with the bar" Richie acquiesces, grabbing Stan's hand and shaking it vigorously.

"Pleasure doing business with you", Stan says with a smirk that makes Richie think he might have been played.

2. Operation: Reddie

Summary for the Chapter:

Stan, Mike and Richie come up with a strategy.

“Yes! Eddie soon-to-be-Tozier. The love of my life”
Richie laments, sighing wistfully.

“You don’t know his second name do you?”

Notes for the Chapter:

This was supposed to be a two-shot but this chapter has kind of become filler? And now Bev's involved?!
Whoops.

Reminder: Ya boi has dyslexia, please point out any mistakes.

In a testament to the other man’s frightening organisational skills, less than an hour after he’d first entered the store, Richie finds himself seated in Stanley’s office. Mike is sitting beside him and Stan himself is cleaning off a whiteboard covered in fabric swatches and sketches of window displays. Stan removes it all and piles it neatly on his desk. He takes out a marker and writes **‘PROJECT FREE WEDDING’** in block capitals at the top of the board. He turns to face Mike and Richie.

“I have... no idea what’s happening right now”, Mike pipes up, understandably confused.

“Richie’s paying for like seventy percent of our wedding because he’s obsessed with Eddie”, Stan replies.

“What? No, Stan we can’t take that amount of money from someone, it’s not right!” Mike immediately protests, horrified.

“Babe, I need you to think about this very carefully. We’ve been saving for three years and we’re still nowhere near having the cash for the wedding we want. You want that hotel on Santa Monica beach, right?” Stan asks, taking Mike’s hands in his own.

“Well, yeah bu-”

“That place is thirty grand alone, plus suits, plus décor, plus a cake”, Stan interrupts.

“Yeah, but we’ve already saved twenty-five thousand!” Mike tries to justify his position.

“And it took over three years, Mike! I don’t want to wait another three years to marry you” Stan pleads, Mike's eyes soften, but he doesn't back down.

“So we take advantage of a customer?” Mike retorts, trying to appeal Stan's professionalism.

“Dude, not thirty minutes ago you charged me two hundred dollars for some smelly water”, Richie points out.

“Plus Richie’s loaded! He was on SNL. He’s doing a Christmas movie with Anna Kendrick, for god’s sake!” Stan explains, pointing their still-joined hands at Richie.

“You recognised me? Why didn’t you say anything?” Richie asks, surprised.

“That’s not professional”, Stan explained.

“Nothing about this situation is professional, Stan!” Mike snaps.

“Woah! Listen, Mike, I’m happy to put up the rest of the money for your wedding. I just really want a chance with Eddie and I need your help. Do it for love, Mike!”

“You don’t think this is a little intrusive? Going behind Eddie’s back to try and get a date with him?” Mike rounds on Richie now. Desperately appealing for someone to have some common sense.

“I’m not going behind his back! I’m just trying to brainstorm some ideas here, man!” Richie baulks, trying to explain his totally innocent intentions. He hadn't realised he may be coming across as a creep.

Stan squeezes Mike's hands to draw his attention again. Once he has

it, he smiles softly at him.

“Mike, this isn’t that big of a deal. We play matchmaker, Richie helps us out with our wedding. If it doesn’t work out, then we won’t take the money”

Mike looks to Richie for backup, but Richie just smiles brightly and nods at him. When Mike doesn’t speak again, Stan moves back to the board and writes ‘**GAY THINGS**’. Mike, still completely lost, decides to go with it. He stands, gently takes the marker from Stan, and draws two stick figures, (one with curly hair), holding hands. He labels them ‘*Stan*’ and ‘*Me*’. He looks back at Richie for a second, then adds a third stick figure a little ways away from the first two, this one with big cartoonish glasses. He labels it ‘*Richie?*’ then erases the question mark when Richie shoots him a thumbs up. Stan watches the whole exchange with soft eyes. He kisses the corner of Mike’s mouth and takes the marker back.

“Thank you, darling, but that’s not entirely what I meant.”

“I figured. I just wanted to contribute”, Mike shrugs, taking his seat beside Richie again.

“Killer contribution, man. I’ve never looked so good”, Richie quips.

“Thanks. So, Eddie?” Mike asks, turning to face Richie.

“Yes! Eddie soon-to-be-Tozier. The love of my life” Richie laments, sighing wistfully.

“You don’t know his second name do you?” Stan questions.

“...Roberts? No that’s stupid. Daniels? Marks? Why am I only picking first names?” Richie tries.

“It’s Kaspbrak”, Mike offers, if only to put Richie out of his misery.

“Oh I never would have guessed that. That’s a stupid fucking name, he’s not keeping that. Wait, does Richie Kaspbrak sound better than Eddie Tozier. Should we hyphenate? Tozier-Kaspbrak? Kaspbrak-

Tozier?" Richie asks, eyes frantically darting between Mike and Stan.

"You have to be able to talk to him before you can change his surname, you absolute cretin" Stan deadpans, palm pressed despairingly to his forehead.

"I'm still not sure what we're doing, man" Mike says, shoulders and voice both shaking with the effort of holding in laughter.

"Right! Mike still doesn't know what's up. Basically, I'm a disaster gay, talked about my friend Bev in front of your hot florist and now he thinks I like women. I'm paying for a shitload of the happiest day of your life in exchange for you counteracting my idiocy and also being one of your best men", Richie explains.

"I didn't agree to that" Stan interjects.

"We'll talk about it later. I look good in a suit" Richie waves him off.

"Noted", Stan acquiesces after looking him up and down.

"So... gay things?" Mike asks.

"Yes! I need to have Eddie wrap some super gay things for me so he knows I'm also super gay", Richie tells him matter-of-factly, as if anything he's said makes sense.

Mike just nods indulgently, then something occurs to him.

"Wait... Is Eddie even gay?" he asks, genuine confusion on his face.

Stan and Richie look to each other, horrified.

"I don't know. I always just assumed. Has he ever talked about a girl to you?" Stan asks Mike.

"Well, no. But has he ever talked about a guy either?" Mike shoots back.

“Guys, this is already embarrassing enough for me, if he turns out to be straight I think I might spontaneously combust” Richie whines.

“Well, how do we find out? We can’t just come right out and ask him, right?” Mike reasons.

“I definitely can’t, I’m technically his boss so I’m pretty sure it’d be some form of sexual harassment”, Stan agrees.

“And I’m a stranger, so it would just be creepy if I asked him”, Richie adds.

Richie and Stan turn to look at Mike in perfect unison. He doesn't even argue; just sighs and leaves the office.

* * *

“Hey Eddie?”

Eddie looks up from the set of bridesmaid’s bouquets he’s working on (white and blue, a tacky colour scheme if you asked him) to see Mike. He’s leaning awkwardly against Eddie’s cash desk. Eddie smiles warmly at him before looking back to his work.

“Oh, hey Mike, What’s up?” he asks.

“Not much. Just... you know. Same old, same old”, Mike tries for a nonchalant shrug, but it just comes off as anxious.

“Yeah? I don’t think I’ve seen you away from the perfume department this much in one day”, Eddie jokes, Mike laughs nervously and tries to ignore the weird look Eddie shoots him.

There’s an awkward silence.

“Oh fuck it, are you gay?” Mike blurts out before he can stop himself.

“What?” Eddie drops his bouquet in shock.

“Are you gay?” Mike repeats, unsure where the bravery comes from.

“Why are you asking me this?”, Eddie asks, cautious.

“...A survey?” Mike tries.

“A survey” Eddie parrots, completely unconvinced.

“Look, are you gay? Yes or no, man. Help me out here” Mike begs.

“Uh, no. I’m not gay”, Eddie replies slowly, still confused.

Mike nods and turns to leave, ready to wave goodbye to the dream wedding he and Stan have been trying to save up for. He's surprised to find that he's dreading Richie's heartbroken face more than Stan's disappointment.

“I’m bi though... if that helps with your 'survey'?” Eddie calls after him.

Mike turns around, seeing Eddie fiddling with the flowers he had dropped, straightening out the crumpled petals and decidedly avoiding eye contact.

“Oh...Thank you for trusting me enough to tell me, Eddie”, Mike thanks him gently and with a wide smile.

“Um, no problem, I guess?” Eddie replies, but Mike is already gone, running off in the opposite direction of the perfume department.

* * *

Stan and Richie are talking quietly, flipping through Stan's wedding planning binder when the door swings open, thumping violently against the wall. They both jump, staring incredulously at Mike as he enters the room. Mike ignores them, walking right up to the board and adding another stick figure, this one holding a flower and labelled ‘Eddie’. Above its head he writes **‘BI THINGS’**.

He spikes the marker onto the ground (re-capped to avoid marking Stan's carpet, he doesn't have a death wish).

"IT'S ON BITCHES!" he crows in celebration.

Richie launches off the couch and pulls Mike into a hug, hooting and hollering with glee.

"Well, let's get to work then", Stan says, apparently back to being the voice of reason.

* * *

"Hey Eddie, can you do a wrap job for me?"

Eddie, right in the middle of tying a very intricate bow with the hideous blue ribbon his current bridal client has chosen, doesn't even look up. He grunts to let Stan know he's listening to him, but doesn't offer anything else.

"Don't worry, he gets like this when he's concentrating", he hears Stan say.

Embarrassed that he hasn't realised Stan has someone with him, Eddie finally looks up. There, standing beside Stan, is the customer from earlier.

"Richie, hi!" Eddie exclaims, hoping he doesn't come off as too eager.

Richie grins widely and gives Eddie an aborted little wave. Stan elbows him, but he still doesn't speak.

"So, you want something else wrapped?" Eddie asks.

Richie just stares at him blankly for a second before he snaps out of it.

"Oh! Yeah, please. I mean, if you aren't busy. You're probably busy,

it's fine, I'll just go. Bye, Eddie!" He says so quickly that the words all blend together.

Richie turns on his heel and runs away, leaving Eddie and Stan staring after him, dumbfounded. Eddie turns to Stan with a clear question on his face. Stan looks back at him with a perfectly blank face.

"He... must have remembered something else he needs to buy. We'll be back later. Goodbye, Eddie."

Stan turns and follows after Richie. Eddie returns to his ugly ribbon, wondering when Stan became a personal shopper.

* * *

"WHAT THE FUCK WAS THAT!", Stan explodes, storming into his own office.

Richie doesn't raise his head from where it's cradled in his hands. Mike is sympathetically rubbing his back.

"Was it really that bad?" Mike asks optimistically.

"Bad? It was a complete shitshow, Mike! He gawped at him like a fish and then ran away!" Stan exclaims, hands gripping at his hair in frustration.

"Oof, Jesus Richie" Mike winces sympathetically.

"I know! I don't know what happened. He's, like, intimidatingly good looking!" Richie wails.

"You're hopeless. I didn't know how hopeless you were before I agreed to this. I don't know if it's worth it anymore", Stan laments.

"Think of the beachfront wedding, babe", Mike reasons.

Stan nods, taking a deep, steadying breath.

“You’re right, we’ll just have to rethink this. The thing you’re buying will just have to do the talking for you”, Stan decides.

Stan turns to his board and examines their updated list.

GAY THINGS

Nail polish (Make it clear it's for you)

Torchwood DVD (talk about how cute Jack and Ianto are)

Jockstrap

Short-shorts

Pinot Grigio

“None of this is gay enough. Even if you bought it all at once you’d be hopeless” Stan declares.

“Do you sell dildos?” Richie finally chips in.

“We do, but that’s a bad idea, he might still think you’re straight but that your dick doesn’t work”, Mike muses.

“Oh damn, no we need him to know my dick works, it’s like half of my selling points” Richie baulks.

Stan and Mike exchange pointed glances.

“Hopeless, I swear to God. Fuck it. Mike, we’re waiting another year!” Stan says, ready to throw in the towel

“No, no, no! wait just a second, what if I sweetened the pot?” Richie offers desperately.

“I’m listening”, Stan concedes.

“Pass me your wedding binder, I’ll pick something out”, Richie holds out his hand and Stan drops the file into it.

Richie examines the little labelling tabs for a second, then flips to the section labelled 'Suits'. The page is covered in fabric swatches in white, black, grey and lilac and pictures of suits cut out from fashion magazines. Richie is surprised to recognise that all of the suits are from Bev's earliest collections.

"Oh wow, you really like Bev's stuff", Richie comments mildly. When Stan doesn't reply, Richie looks up to see the other man staring at him, slack-jawed. He turns to ask Mike what's wrong, only to see him staring at Richie with the exact same look on his face.

"What? Have I got something on my face?", Richie asks, suddenly self-conscious. He starts swiping at his face.

"I'm sorry, you didn't, at any point, think to mention that your friend 'Bev' is BEVERLY FUCKING MARSH", Stan screams, incredulous.

"Uh, I didn't really think it mattered" Richie replies.

Stan crosses the room to sit beside Richie. In what Richie believed to be an uncharacteristic show of familiarity with a practical stranger, Stan takes Richie's face between his hands.

"Richie?" he asks.

"Yes, Stan?" Richie replies, voice slightly muffled by the pressure Stan is putting on his cheeks.

"I swear to you, I will marry you off to Eddie, I will walk you down the aisle, I will officiate your fucking wedding. All you have to do is get Beverly Marsh to agree to make my wedding suit" Stan vows.

"Hey!" Mike interjects, unhappy that he'd been forgotten.

"And Mike's wedding suit", Stan adds without missing a beat.

Richie takes a moment to think about it. He considers Bev's packed schedule, her upcoming show and her shitbag ex-husband who convinced her to stop designing menswear and thinks about saying no. Then he remembers that she's threatened him with a singles cruise if he didn't hurry up and find himself a man. He holds one

finger up to Stan.

“Can you give me a sec? I’m just going to call Bev and run this by her”, he requests.

Stan releases Richie and nods dumbly.

“You’re going to call Beverly Marsh, right now?” he asks.

“Yeah, man. Do you want to say hi?” Richie offers.

Stan backs away, shaking his head. When Richie pulls out his phone, Stan squeaks out a high pitched little noise, turns on his heel and leaves the room. Richie turns to Mike, confusion clear on his face.

“She’s his idol, dude. He wrote his thesis on her designs”, Mike answered with a shrug.

“That’s the cutest fucking thing I’ve ever heard. Oh my god, Bev’s going to love this”, Richie coos, already scrolling through his contacts.

“I’ll go check on him, give you some privacy”, Mike chuckles, following his fiancé out of the room and closing the door behind him as Richie waves goodbye.

* * *

The phone only rings twice before Bev picks up.

“This had better be important, Trashmouth. I’m surrounded by models who need dressed right now”, Bev’s voice is tense but not harsh.

“And you’re complaining? God Bevv, fame has changed you”, Richie jokes.

“Shut up, turn around hun”, she demands.

“What?” Richie squawks, jumping up to look over his shoulder in

case she's developed some freaky sixth sense and there's a fucking murderer behind him.

"Not you, Rich. Zipping up one of the girls, sorry. What do you want?", Bev asks.

"I'm in love, Beverly", Richie sighs melodramatically.

"I swear to god, if this is another limited edition Frappuccino, I'll find whatever Starbucks you're at and burn it down", She threatens, voice completely serious.

"Wow, you a little stressed over there?" Richie asks, hiding his concern behind a teasing tone.

"I'm surviving on coffee and hope right now", Richie can tell by her muffled voice that she's holding some pins between her teeth.

"Ouch, want me to swing by with lunch later?" Richie hisses sympathetically.

"Burgers and milkshakes?", Bev requests, voice full of undisguised longing.

"You know it", He agrees.

"I love you, now tell me about this Frappuccino of yours", she teases.

"Well, he's called Eddie, he looks like God chiselled him from the leftover marble once he was done making the angels. He's a florist, Beverly. How fucking pure is that?" Richie rambles, flopping down onto the couch. If the phone had a cord, he'd be twiddling it between his fingers.

"Hold up. This is an actual person? You're in love with an actual person? Not a drink, or a fictional doctor on a hospital show or some random person you passed on the street? This is an actual person you've had an actual conversation with. In real life?" disbelief is clear in her voice.

"I find your lack of faith disturbing", Richie replies in his best Darth Vader voice.

"No offence, Richie, but you have to admit you don't have the best track record with guys" Bev comments.

"I resent that" Richie argues in mock offence.

"Rich, when's the last time you went on a date. An actual date. Not a Grindr hookup or taking a guy home from a bar", Bev asks, not unkindly.

Richie stays silent.

"Exactly. Your usual type is closeted chest-pic guys and sleazy one night stands who sneak out before you're awake. Now you call me and tell me you've met a florist of all things? That's downright wholesome, Rich! When are you taking him out? Are you doing dinner or something?" Bev asks excitedly.

"Well...about that. I'm actually calling to ask you for help" Richie reveals, rubbing sheepishly at the back of his neck.

"Oh, no", Bev intones.

"It's nothing bad! I just... I kind of panicked when I tried to talk to him and now I'm being blackmailed", Richie drops the bomb all in one breath, then holds the phone away from his ear, tensely waiting for the inevitable blow up from mama-bear Bev.

"WHAT?!", Richie flinches despite being prepared for the screech.

"Well, it's more of an amicable blackmail, if I'm honest. Downright friendly, almost", Richie attempts to placate her.

"What the fuck is amicable blackmail", she asks incredulously.

"Basically two guys he works with are helping me ask him out. One of them is a fan of yours, actually!" Richie exclaims, hoping it'll distract her.

"Really? That's adorable!" Bev squeals. Richie silently pats himself on the back for successful derailing her ire.

"I told him you'd say that!" Richie tells her, vindicated.

"Is he there? Can I say hi?" Bev asks.

"No he freaked and left the room as soon as I told him I was calling you" Richie explains.

"I love him. Tell him he's my son now" Bev says, completely serious.

"Will do, anyway, he's marrying his boyfriend so I've offered monetary assistance. But he wants you to design their wedding suits. I'll pay you for your time, obviously." Richie crosses his fingers hopefully.

"Rich... As much as I want to help you, you know I don't do menswear anymore", Bev shoots him down gently, voice dripping with regret.

"I know! But you've been talking about trying it again for over a year! And isn't this the best way to test it out? With someone who loves you so much that you could dress him in a puke green tuxedo and he'd still be thrilled with it?" Richie needles her.

"You know what? Fuck it. You're right! Tell my gay son I love him and he can consider this my wedding gift" Bev declares, voice determined.

"Yes! Thank you Bevvvy! You're the best. I'll be with you in an hour with like, twelve burgers!" Richie tells her, fist thrown into the air in victory.

"Get yourself something too", she says in a way that has Richie unsure if she's kidding or not.

They say goodbye and hang up. Richie gets up to call Mike and Stan back in. When he opens the office door, Stan stumbles in, clearly having been leaning on the door. Mike catches him before he falls and they both smile sheepishly at Richie.

"How'd it go?" Mike asks, as if they hadn't just been caught eavesdropping.

Richie just grins widely at them.

"Looks like you're having a Bev Marsh wedding", He tells them.

Stan launches himself forward and Richie finds himself being hugged tightly. Only for a second though, as Stan pushes back and straightens himself out, buzzing with excited energy.

“Time for me to hold up my end, then. Let’s get back to work”, Stan returns to his board, all business once again.

“Operation: Reddie is back on track” Mike jokes, clapping Richie on the shoulder.